

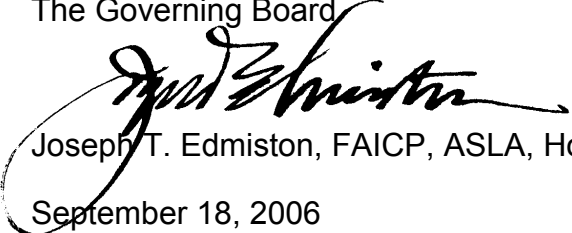


MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, ASLA, Hon., Executive Officer

DATE: September 18, 2006

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing the acceptance of a trail easement south of Lake Sherwood pursuant to a condition of Ventura County's Sherwood Specific Plan.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acceptance of a trail easement south of Lake Sherwood across Sherwood Development Company property in unincorporated Ventura County.

Background: A mitigation measure for the Lake Sherwood Development, which was approved by the County Board of Supervisors in the 1980's, requires the dedication of a trail easement to a public or nonprofit agency. The County of Ventura Planning Division has requested that the MRCA consider acceptance of the trail easement. Sherwood Development Company initiated discussions with both the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) and the National Park Service (NPS) some time ago. NPS has since declined the easement, and COSCA staff suggested that MRCA consider the easement, since, for among other reasons, the trail would ultimately be a regional connector and more in line with MRCA's regional mission.

The proposed alignment of the easement would start off Carlisle Road, follow the terrain to the extent possible (numerous switchbacks would be necessary), and terminate at the westernmost Sherwood Development property boundary. The terrain is mostly volcanic and very steep in sections. Actual trail design and construction will be extremely challenging. The Sherwood Development Company has indicated that they will provide a trailhead location and site preparation, and Supervisor Parks has offered Quimby funds toward funding eventual trail construction. A private parcel intervenes between the Sherwood property and NPS' Circle X Ranch (a 1985 MRCA purchase), so for the immediate future there would be no public land destination point. However, a trail would provide a beautiful route through Redshanks chaparral habitat with magnificent rock outcrops and formations.

The Sherwood Country Club and golf course are in the viewshed. If the Board approves acceptance of the easement, staff would pursue other possible offsite easements or land acquisition to provide feasible trail connections and better phasing for construction. If the trail can be connected to Circle X Ranch, the trail could ultimately provide a route to the Backbone Trail. In the short term, acceptance of the easement does preserve the opportunity for future trail building. The trail easement is important also as the only public recreation dedication in the Sherwood development.

A large topo map with the suggested trail easement alignment will be available for viewing at the Governing Board meeting.